

Page 8A

Informant says he lied, woman freed

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — A woman was released from prison and charges against two men were dropped after a drug informant told police he lied on the witness stand.

Jul Jerrell Bray, who has a history of drug convictions, admitted he lied after he was arrested in the shooting of a man during a robbery in May.

In response, U.S. Attorney Greg White asked a judge to release Geneva France, 24, of Mansfield, who was serving a 10-year sentence on a drug conviction. On June 29, U.S. District Judge Patricia A. Gaughan ordered France free on bond while prosecutors investigate Bray's claims.

A jury convicted France in February 2006 and she spent 16 months in prison.

"At the very least, Ms. France would be entitled to a new trial," White said Tuesday. "According to the ethical standards we operate under, we do not feel we could go forward with that trial."

This month, prosecutors dropped charges against Joshawa Webb, 28, of Mansfield, and Curtis Anderson, 37, of Cleveland, who were in jail awaiting trial. Like France's case, those cases depended on Bray's credibility, White said.

"There was enough doubt that we needed to act and act quickly, so we did," White said. "Now there's a larger investigation that will be conducted."

Informant: Local drug convictions built on his lies

Twenty sentenced in Mansfield probe

CLEVELAND (AP) —

An informant said he and a federal drug agent made up testimony to get convictions in a wide-ranging investigation in Mansfield.

Twenty people were convicted in the investigation, four were acquitted and one had the charges dropped. One person spent two years locked up before being released from a 10-year prison sentence but could be tried again on the charges.

Using informant Jerrell Bray, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Lee Lucas went after a group of people, many with drug convictions, to make a conspiracy case that would land many suspected drug peddlers in prison for more than 10 years.

False accusations

According to Bray, he and Lucas falsely accused people and made up testimony to get the convictions.

Lucas has declined to comment and Bray's attorney has pushed for an inquiry into Lucas' work, according to The Plain Dealer, which interviewed defendants involved in the case. There is no Lee Lucas phone listing in the Cleveland area and his office wasn't taking messages after regular business hours Monday evening.

Bray made the allegations of phony testimony in the Mansfield case when he met with a federal public defender to discuss a recent drug-related shooting case involving Bray in Cleveland.

U.S. Justice Department lawyers from other regions are investigating Bray and Lucas, who handled informants in Miami and Bolivia for their work in 2005 and are examining at least five

"...law enforcement and other people are required to tell the truth. The ends don't justify the means."

Geoffrey Mearns
Cleveland-Marshall
College of Law

cases to determine if convictions should be overturned.

The Cleveland office under U.S. Attorney Greg White, which handled the original cases, stepped aside from the probe last week.

Relatives of those convicted say prosecutors should drop the charges and release the people in prison. They say the cases have been sullied by Bray, 34, and Lucas, 39.

'Some cowboys'

"There were some cowboys who were out to get us," said Johnnie Parker, who was acquitted at trial in July 2006 with her son, Joe Ward.

Geoffrey Mearns, a former federal prosecutor who now leads Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, said police and prosecutors cannot bend rules put in place to protect both the guilty and innocent.

"People in law enforcement are given a great deal of power," Mearns said. "One of the checks against the potential abuse of that power is that law enforcement and other people are required to tell the truth. The ends don't justify the means."

Last week a Mansfield man who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine and was sentenced to nearly four years in prison asked that

See LIES,
back page

the details of this defendant's relationship with Lee Lucas and Lucas' conduct," attorney James Willis said. Federal prosecutors did not oppose the motion.

hearing after the lawyer for a man who pleaded guilty to selling cocaine to Lucas asked for more time to investigate the agent's work in that case. "A continuance would give us the opportunity to sort out

based on Bray's statements. Federal prosecutors opposed the request. In a second case in Cleveland, U.S. District Judge Christopher Boyko agreed last week to delay a sentencing

his guilty plea be vacated and that he be let out of prison.

Lies

From page 1A

Informant: Local drug convictions built on his lies

Page 8A

Informant says he lied, woman freed

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — A woman was released from prison and charges against two men were dropped after a drug informant told police he lied on the witness stand.

IN Jerrell Bray, who has a history of drug convictions admitted he lied after he was arrested in the shooting of a man during a robbery in May.

In response, U.S. Attorney Greg White asked a judge to release Geneva France, 24, of Mansfield, who was serving a 10-year sentence on a drug conviction. On June 29, U.S. District Judge Patricia A. Gaughan ordered France free on bond while prosecutors investigate Bray's claims.

A jury convicted France in February 2006 and she spent 16 months in prison.

"At the very least, Ms. France would be entitled to a new trial," White said Tuesday. "According to the ethical standards we operate under, we do not feel we could go forward with that trial."

This month, prosecutors dropped charges against Joshawa Webb, 28 of Mansfield, and Curtis Anderson, 37, of Cleveland, who were in jail awaiting trial. Like France's case, those cases depended on Bray's credibility, White said.

"There was enough doubt that we needed to act and act quickly, so we did," White said. "Now there's a larger investigation that will be conducted."

Twenty sentenced in Mansfield probe

CLEVELAND (AP) —

An informant said he and a federal drug agent made up testimony to get convictions in a wide-ranging investigation in Mansfield.

Twenty people were convicted in the investigation, four were acquitted and one had the charges dropped. One person spent two years locked up before being released from a 10-year prison sentence but could be tried again on the charges.

Using informant Jerrell Bray, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Lee Lucas went after a group of people, many with drug convictions, to make a conspiracy case that would land many suspected drug peddlers in prison for more than 10 years.

False accusations

According to Bray, he and Lucas falsely accused people and made up testimony to get the convictions.

Lucas has declined to comment and Bray's attorney has pushed for an inquiry into Lucas' work, according to The Plain Dealer, which interviewed defendants involved in the case. There is no Lee Lucas phone listing in the Cleveland area and his office wasn't taking messages after regular business hours Monday evening.

Bray made the allegations of phony testimony in the Mansfield case when he met with a federal public defender to discuss a recent drug-related shooting case involving Bray in Cleveland.

U.S. Justice Department lawyers from other regions are investigating Bray and Lucas, who handled informants in Miami and Bolivia for their work in 2005 and are examining at least five

"...law enforcement and other people are required to tell the truth. The ends don't justify the means."

Geoffrey Mearns
Cleveland-Marshall
College of Law

cases to determine if convictions should be overturned.

The Cleveland office under U.S. Attorney Greg White, which handled the original cases, stepped aside from the probe last week.

Relatives of those convicted say prosecutors should drop the charges and release the people in prison. They say the cases have been sullied by Bray, 34, and Lucas, 39.

'Some cowboys'

"There were some cowboys who were out to get us," said Johnnie Parker, who was acquitted at trial in July 2006 with her son, Joe Ward.

Geoffrey Mearns, a former federal prosecutor who now leads Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, said police and prosecutors cannot bend rules put in place to protect both the guilty and innocent.

"People in law enforcement are given a great deal of power," Mearns said. "One of the checks against the potential abuse of that power is that law enforcement and other people are required to tell the truth. The ends don't justify the means."

Last week a Mansfield man who pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine and was sentenced to nearly four years in prison asked that

See LIES,
back page

the details of this defendant's relationship with Lee Lucas and Lucas' conduct," attorney James Willis said. Federal prosecutors did not oppose the motion.

hearing after the lawyer for a man who pleaded guilty to selling cocaine to Lucas asked for more time to investigate the agent's work in that case. "A continuance would give us the opportunity to sort out

based on Bray's statements. Federal prosecutors opposed the request. In a second case in Cleveland, U.S. District Judge Christopher Boyko agreed last week to delay a sentencing

Lies

From page 1A

his guilty plea be vacated and that he be let out of prison.